



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
20250

Mr. Alejandro Checchi Lang
Director, Directorate E
Health and Consumer Protection
Directorate-General
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

AUG - 6 2004

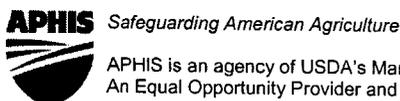
Dear Mr. Checchi Lang:

This letter outlines first steps that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) intends to take towards evaluating the classical swine fever (CSF) status of the 10 new European Union (EU) Member States. The goal of the evaluation is to open trade in swine and swine products between the United States and the entire EU. This is a followup to discussions held between officials of APHIS and the European Commission (EC) in conjunction with the EC/US Veterinary Agreement Animal Health Technical Working Group meeting in Brussels on April 19, 2004.

In order to comply with the regulations in Title 9, *Code of Federal Regulations*, section 92.2 (9 CFR 92.2), APHIS intends to evaluate each of these States according to the 11 factors defined in the regulations. We have already received and begun to review a significant amount of information from Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Lithuania. To assist you in preparing the information for the remaining 6 Member States, we have enclosed the standard list of the 11 factors with detailed questions on each factor (Enclosure 1). This document appears on our Web site: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/reg-request.html>.

The second enclosure to this letter outlines additional questions regarding the individual new Member States on topics not specifically addressed in the 11 factors. For example, we are interested in the following: the means and degree to which each State has transposed the applicable European Commission (EC) decisions, directives, and regulations regarding animal health controls, surveillance, and contingency plans into its national law; the level of implementation of these measures; the measures taken by Member States that are not required by EC regulations; the potential for transmission of CSF from wild boar to domestic pigs; and other issues.

Because of unique characteristics of the EU relative to free trade in animals and animal products among many Member States, in addition to our evaluation of individual Member States, APHIS intends to conduct a risk analysis of the 10 new Member States as a single region. The information needed for this analysis is not specifically identified in this communication but will be defined soon. Generally, however, we are particularly interested in characteristics that might contribute to risk from a region composed of several rather heterogeneous entities. For example, we will be requesting data on animal and product movement patterns within the new region, and from the new Member States to the previously existing EU Members.



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Please remember that an initial data review is only one of the steps in the evaluation process. The process will also include one or more site visits to the region to verify and/or complement the information you provide. The information provided for the initial evaluation and obtained and verified during the site visit(s) will then be used to conduct a risk analysis.

Ultimately, the evaluation process will require changes to the 9 CFR, which cannot be implemented until after the public has had an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed changes. As you are aware, the regulatory process that APHIS must follow is lengthy.

Your primary contact for this project is Dr. Chip Wells, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, National Center for Import and Export, Regionalization Evaluation Services Staff, Unit 38, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737. His telephone number is 301-734-4356; his fax number is 301-734-3222; and his e-mail address is chip.j.wells@aphis.usda.gov. Please feel free to contact Dr. Wells if you have any questions or concerns.

We look forward to working with you during this process.

Sincerely,



John R. Clifford
Deputy Administrator
Veterinary Services

Enclosures